

**PRESERVING:** ■ FAMILY FARMS ■ SOIL ■ SCENIC VIEWS  
 ■ RIVERS & STREAMS ■ CULTURAL SITES ■ SCENIC BYWAYS  
 ■ GROUND WATER ■ RURAL CHARACTER



# Clarke County Easement News

SPRING

2008

## 46-Acre Farm Protected; 3 Dwelling Unit Rights Extinguished With Grant Money From The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

In February, the Authority recorded its first easement using grant money received from the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program. This program, which provides grant opportunities to localities for land possessing "prime" or "statewide important" soils, is operated by the Department of Agriculture's National Resource Conservation Service.



Development Rights (PDR) program created by the state.

PDR programs compensate landowners who place permanent conservation easements on their properties. This is the first time the state has given matching funds for certified local PDR programs.

In announcing the grant, Governor Kaine said the program's goal is to stop the alarming loss of valuable farmland to development in the state.

"We have taken an historic step to

ensure that well-managed farmland around the Commonwealth will be preserved and available for continued agricultural use, now and into the future. These funds will benefit Virginia's farmers, the local economies and the environment."

Since its founding in late 2003, the Easement Authority has accepted easements on 45 properties, only seven of which (counting Mr. Russell's) were purchased. This grant will give the Authority added resources to pursue more purchases on properties worthy of consideration.

### Did You Know?

Contributions assist the Easement Authority in qualifying for matching funds, which can result in a three-fold return on every dollar donated.

The funds were used to purchase an easement on "Idylwood," a 46-acre horse and cattle farm in the southwest corner of the County. The property, which includes a farmhouse built in 1900, is owned by Thomas "Rusty" Russell. A lifetime resident of Clarke County, Mr. Russell chose



Photo: A. Teetor

Thomas "Rusty" Russell

to put his property in permanent easement and to retire all three remaining development rights, rather than to subdivide the parcel and reduce the amount of land he could use for farming. Eighty-two percent of the soils at Idylwood are considered prime by the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

**More than 300,000 acres have been protected in 42 states since the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program was launched in 2003.**

Funding for easement purchase on a property such as Idylwood is based on a formula in which the grant pays approximately 50% of the appraised value of the easement, the County pays 25% and the landowner donates 25%. Purchasing an easement makes it possible for lower income farmers to be compensated for some portion of their land's future development potential while allowing them to continue farming.

## Clarke County's Farms, Local Economy, and Environment Benefit from \$403,200 State Grant

Clarke County has received \$403,200 to help preserve agricultural and open-space land through a Purchase of

## Save the Date

Celebrate the start of summer with fellow contributors at the **3rd Annual Donor Thank You Reception** sponsored by the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority on **Friday, June 20, 2008**. Invitations go into the mail next month. But mark your calendar now so you don't miss this wonderful event featuring light refreshments and a chance to meet fellow donors in a beautiful outdoor setting. No better way to salute the beginning of summer!



## True or False?

According to the monitoring station at Blandy Experimental Farm, groundwater in Clarke County is seven feet below its level this time last year.

Answer on reverse side

# Many Thanks to ALL Our Contributors!\*

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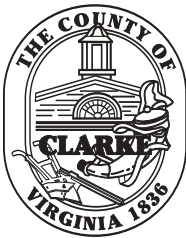
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**Did You Know?**  
Virginia's leading  
industries are  
agriculture and  
forestry, but  
forest lands in  
Virginia are  
disappearing at a  
rate of over  
20,000 acres  
per year.

Answer: TRUE



**Clarke County  
Conservation  
Easement  
Authority**

102 North Church Street  
Berryville, VA 22611

**Please join these individuals in helping preserve open space in Clarke County  
Complete and mail this form with your tax deductible contribution today.**

***YES! I want to help preserve open space in Clarke County.***

Please accept the enclosed tax-deductible contribution in the amount checked below.

☐ \$15 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Make check payable to: Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority and mail to the address at left.